



Houston Refugee Pro Bono Project

The Houston Refugee Pro Bono Project (HRPBP), a program of YMCA International Services, was established in 1987 as a response to the critical shortage of pro bono legal representation in the Immigration Court. Our program coordinates volunteer attorneys, paralegals, and interpreters to provide pro bono legal representation for indigent asylum seekers, particularly those in deportation/removal proceedings.

The HRPBP is funded by the Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation and is coordinated with the assistance of St. Frances Cabrini Center for Immigrant Legal Assistance of Catholic Charities, the Immigration Law Clinic at the University of Houston Law Center, the Texas Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and other concerned agency representatives and private attorneys.

The HRPBP relies on the commitment of volunteers to provide representation for clients. In return, the Houston Refugee Pro Bono Project provides volunteers with the following resources:

- Full time Staff Attorney at YMCA International Services
- Full time Supervisor/Accredited Representative at YMCA International Services
- Full time Pro Bono Coordinator on staff at YMCA International Services
- A mechanism for intake and eligibility determination of clients
- A structure for recruitment and training of volunteers
- Training seminars, which orient volunteers to the HRPBP, program objectives, and mode of operation
- U.S. Asylum law, and local Immigration Court procedures
- Instruction manuals that cover the political asylum application process
- A “mentor” system by which an experienced immigration attorney is assigned to each case to work with and advise those attorneys whose areas of expertise are not presently in immigration law
- Case follow-up and continuing staff assistance
- Volunteer interpreters

All attorneys volunteering with this program are covered under the program’s malpractice insurance policy.